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GREEN LANTERNS

By MARY SYNON

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nothing else, no one else, while you stood over Benedict's body?"

"The switch lights shifted. That was all."

"Where are they?"

"In the semaphore arms on the Carpenter side of the bridge," Justin explained.

"From where are they operated?"

"From the tower near the bridge."

"On the Carpenter side of the river?"

"Yes."

"How are they operated?"

"There's a tower man."

"Could he have seen you from the tower?"

"Why, of course."

"And he didn't come?"

"He gave no sign."

"Who is he?"

"An old man who'd had the job for years and years. I think his name is Foran. He lives in a little hut on Doane street."

"Perhaps he didn't see us at all," I said. "His wife had died that day. It was to their house I went, Mr. Winnerly, when I left the settlement."

"And you didn't get in?"

He rose with alacrity surprising in so big a man. "We're going out to look over the ground," he said. He reached for his ulster as Rothan returned. "One of the men telephoned to me from the Probate court," he said, "that the Benedict will has just been filed. It leaves everything he had to a woman named Lily Davis."

"Relative?"

"Apparently not. It directs that $20,000 be spent within six months to find her."

"You might go to Benedict's lawyers, Rothan, while I'm out, and ask them if they want us to take the job for ten thousand."

"It might cost us more than that."

"It might," he said.

He drove his own car, a powerful roadster, steering it with amazing skill while he kept up a running commentary on the panorama of the city that unfolded itself as we went northward. Like grandmother, he had known its beginnings. Unlike her, he knew its ramifications, and his comments gleamed with knowledge of events and men, touched by a certain dry humor.

I was glad to see that his talk was taking Justin out of himself, for he had been strangely gloomy when I had met him in Winnerly's office, and I dreaded lest he lose his fighting spirit. Why, O, why, didn't Natalie come to him? I revolved the thought as I tried to keep my attention on the older man's conversation until I realized that I had brought myself into blazing anger against her. Then, with a sigh, I told myself that their adjustment of their lives was her and Justin's affair, not mine. All that I could do was hold faith in him and give help to him until he had proven to the world and Natalie what he need not prove to me.

We ran through the park to Carpenter avenue, then westward to the railroad station. It was not yet dark, but the factories along the way were great fortresses of light, facading the dusk. The light from the Benedict plant radiated to the railway roadbed as we came to the platform. Step by step we went with Kenneth Winnerly, living again those moments when we had found Benedict. He measured distances with his eye in the way of engineers ere he walked down the track to the bridge. He halted again, looking up at the tower. He beckoned to us, and we followed him up the stairs.

A stout, middle aged man opened the door grudgingly. "What do you want?" he growled at us. "Are you the night tower man?" Winnerly asked him. "No," he shouted. "Who is?" "Tom Foran," he exploded, and shut the door in our faces.

Justin and I started back to the platform, but Winnerly halted us. "This is a short cut," he said, and led us across the stretch of ground that backed to Foran's shack.

The old man flung back the door in answer to Winnerly's knock. He looked at Winnerly and Justin without curiosity, and took the hand I held out to him. "Mr. Winnerly is trying to find out more about the murder of Mr. Benedict," I explained, "and he thought that, since you are on duty in the tower at night, you might have seen something that will lead us to the truth about it."

He motioned us to the few chairs that ranged around the room where his wife had lain dead when I had been in it only the day before. He had the queer, burned-out look of a man who has lived his life and who waits with sodden patience for death to claim him. His eyes seemed to be looking far beyond us as he answered Winnerly's question of what he knew of Benedict's murder.

"I know all about it," he said.

"Will you tell us?" Winnerly asked him.

"There's not so much to tell," he said, his toneless old voice striking against the bare walls of the room. "I've known Benedict since he came to Staley's Bend. That was twenty-nine years ago in April. I was the contract inspector for that section. I'd been married just the year before, and we'd fixed up the house the way folks do when they're young, and happy, and loving each other. Lily—she was my wife—and I had known each other since we were boy and girl in Iowa. She——"

"What was her name?" Winnerly inquired.

"Lily—Lily Davis."

"O, yes," said Winnerly. "And then Benedict came?"

"He was one of the contractors. He seemed to take a liking to me, and we grew to be friends. He used to come up to the house because we were sorry for him, living in the camp and liking it none too well. I never thought anything about it. It was the way of the West in those days, anyhow, and Lily and I said to each other that we had happiness enough to spare a little bit for the lonely fellows who drifted along."

He paused, as if he pondered upon the too brief spell of those days while Winnerly watched him with considering attention and Justin and I with breathless wonder. "One day I went home from work," he went on, "and found that Lily had gone away—with Benedict."

"What did you do?" Winnerly questioned.

"What can a man do? I hadn't made her happy, I figured, and he might, and so I left them to work it out. I got a divorce and notified her of it, and let her know she could take back her name of Lily Davis."

"That was why Benedict left her the money under that name," Justin murmured to me.

"I thought he'd marry her when he heard he could. But he didn't. He tired of her, and he offered to give her ten thousand dollars—he was making a lot of money by that time—if she'd leave him. She left him, but she wouldn't take any of his money."

"Where did she go?"

"She came back to me."

"And you took her?"

"What else could I do?" He stared at us each in turn. "I always loved Lily."

"And Benedict."

His old face hardened. "The night she came back, I told her I'd kill him. She begged me not to. It wasn't that she loved him then. But he'd broken her in the time she'd been with him. She'd grown afraid, afraid of everything in the world but me. She'd say to me, 'Tom, if you kill John Benedict, they'll take you for it, and hang you.' I used to tell her that I didn't care, that I'd be willing to die as long as I'd sent him out ahead of me and he knew why I'd done it. But she'd say, 'Tom, if they hang you, there won't be any one in the whole wide world to care about me, and what'll become of me' So I didn't say anything to her after awhile about killing Benedict, but I made a vow to myself, that if Lily died before me, I'd give him the death he deserved."

"Why didn't you kill him when he'd first taken your wife?" Winnerly asked.

"I thought she loved him and he loved her, and would be good to her. When he treated her the way he did, flung her away when he tired of her, as if she'd been——. God, I had to kill him!"

"When did you come here?"

"Twenty years ago. I always kept my eye on Benedict. He moved out of Staley's Bend because I knew that Lily couldn't stand it there after every one knew about her and Benedict. We went to Denver. Then Benedict moved East and I followed him. Lily guessed why I came, but she wasn't sure till I got this job in the tower and settled down here in front of Benedict's factory.

"For twenty years I've watched it grow, stone on stone, and acre on acre. For twenty years I've watched John Benedict grow rich while I've seen Lily growing poorer and poorer. I was never a man that could make money. I work, and work hard and faithful, but money don't come to my kind. I'd have made it for her, if I'd known how, but all I could do was hold the tower job, and watch that big plant crawling down the street. Day after day I'd see John Benedict passing, first in his carriages, then in his automobiles. Sometimes Lily saw him, but not often. She kept to herself so that she wouldn't be in danger of meeting him. She'd watch me when I'd go out at odd times, as if she were asking me not to do anything that would hurt her."

"Did she care for Benedict even then?"

"Care for him?" He turned on Winnerly with a sudden flash of fire in his embered eyes. "She hated him as I couldn't hate him, for once she'd loved him! No, she'd have killed him if she'd dared, but she was afraid. She was always afraid after she'd been with him. That was what he did to people."

Justin nodded assent to Winnerly as Tom Foran returned to events from analysis, falling back into that strange clairvoyant manner of narrative.

"I used to sit in the tower there of nights, waiting for the limiteds and locals, and look out on the lights of the plant where men and women worked to make John Benedict richer. I'd think how he had everything, and Lily had nothing, and I'd say to myself that the day would come when he'd pay me for what he'd done to her. The day came when Lily died."

"That was——?"

"That was three days back. She'd been sick for a long time, but she was never one to say much about it. I tended her as best I could, but the doctor told me a week back that there was no hope. Then I knew that I'd soon have the reckoning to make. I had to keep her from guessing it, though. She might have made me promise not to touch him. But she went away without asking me. All she said was, 'I'll be waiting for you, Tom. Come soon.'"

His old eyes seemed to be looking beyond us, beyond the bare walls beyond space, as if they gazed into other eyes that met and answered their tenderness. Some power so impelling brooded over us all that I knew why Justin set his hand over mine and why tears glistened in Kenneth Winnerly's eyes. We knew that, for all the simple candor of its telling, we stood in the presence of a great love, twisted though it would prove to be into a revenge. We were all silent for a long time. Then Tom Foran went back to his story.

"I telephoned to Benedict that morning. I said to him, 'I'm Tom Foran.' He gasped and spluttered into the telephone. 'I live in the shack down Doane street, next to the river,' I told him. 'I want you to come at 9 o'clock tonight. If you don't come to me then I'll go to you another time.' He didn't say a word, but I knew he'd come.

"It was half past 9 when he came. The Timber Wolf Special goes through at 8:51. I let her by and set the signals. The Sunset Trail Limited comes next, at 10:06. I was wondering if he'd come in time to let me back to give her the bridge, when I heard the knock on the door there. I opened it, and, after twenty-seven years, John Benedict came back into my house.

"He stood there, in front of the window. You know how big he was. In the light from the candles around Lily's coffin he loomed like a great shadow. He looked gray as he stared at me. 'Then she's dead?' he said, and his voice was no more than a whisper. 'She's dead,' I told him, 'but her heart died on the day you sent her away.'

"'I've meant to do right by her, Tom,' he said. 'I've always meant it. I've made out my will, leaving every cent to her.'

"'What good'll it do her?' I asked him.

"'She wouldn't take money from me,' he said. 'Can I look at her?'

"'No,' I told him.

"He edged nearer to me. 'Tom,' he said, 'you know I'm rich. There are plenty of women I could have married. If I didn't marry any one of them it was because of Lily. Won't you let me look at her?'

"'No,' I said.

"He flung back his head at that. 'I never begged anything of any man,' he said, and he started to the door. 'I'm not through with you,' I told him, and stepped in front of him. 'You're going to listen to me.'

"He listened. I told him how Lily had come back to me, broken and beaten by life and him. I showed him how she'd come creeping up in the night from the town below the Bend because she couldn't face the crowd at the station. I told him how she'd sobbed and clung to me. I told him how she'd turned to me, and hated him. I told him how I'd planned to go down to Denver and kill him, but how she'd held me because she was afraid of life without me. 'That's what you'd done to her,' I said to him, 'to the girl who had never feared anything in this world or the next before you took her. That's why I didn't go after you twenty-seven years ago. I had to wait till Lily died. And now——'

"He'd been listening to me with a queer look in his eyes while I talked of her, a look of pain and remorse. It changed when I moved toward him. 'You're not—not going to kill me?' he asked me. 'Not while she lies there?'

"'Because she lies there,' I told him.

"'We're old men, Tom,' he said.

"'Not too old to pay the price of our youth,' I cried.

"He moved back toward the window, slipped off his overcoat, then made a lunge at me. I'm agile and he wasn't, and I slipped under his arm. Around and around the room we went, with no lights but the tapers over Lily's coffin. Over there, by the little flower stand I'd made for her geraniums, he slipped. I sprang on him and killed him. It was queer, it was so easy. He died easier than Lily had.

"The clock in the kitchen struck 10. I'd forgotten to stop it when Lily died. I remembered the Sunset Trail, due at the bridge at 10:06. I had to go to the tower, but I couldn't leave him, dead though he was, and dead though she was, in the room here with Lily. And so I carried him out.

"I dragged him, step by step, to the tracks. I'd thought I'd take him to the river so that they wouldn't find him for a day or two, not until she was buried, but I hadn't the time. The limited had left the terminal and would be at the bridge in two minutes more. I had to let him lie on the roadbed while I went up in the tower. Burgess was whistling for the targets when I got there. I set the green and let him through.

"I'd thought I'd go down and take Benedict off the tracks when I saw a man come off the platform and go to where he lay. Then I knew I couldn't go back. Then a woman came. I watched them, then remembered to shift back the targets to red. Then I came back to the house here, got Benedict's overcoat, and took it out with me when I went to signal the local. There isn't another train for two hours then. I came back here, and all night, between the trains, I kept watch. Just before dawn I felt that Lily knew and understood.

"I told them today I was leaving the tower and to send another man. As soon as he came I meant to tell the police. Do you want me to go with you now?"

I looked at Winnerly for an answer, but it was Justin who spoke. "If you want to get away, Foran," he said in a strangely husky voice, "you'd better go now."

"What about you?" Winnerly asked.

"I'll take my chances," he said.

Winnerly stood up. "You can't do that, my boy," he said, "and there's no need. I know a lawyer who can make him tell that story again so that no jury will send him down. And if he doesn't take it—but, by God, I'll make him!" His square jaws snapped. "Will you be willing to come with me?" he asked Foran. "I think I can save you, confession and all."

"It doesn't matter," Tom Foran said. "I've always planned to pay the price." He turned to me, as if seeing me for the first time. "If anything happens to me, miss," he said, "will you put some geraniums in the spring on Lily's grave?"

Justin and I stood in the darkness of Doane street while Foran locked the door of the little shack. I was struggling to keep down my sobs when Justin spoke to me. "After all," he said, "the love that holds through the dark is the only one. Isn't it?" I felt the clasp of his hand on mine. "O, my dear," I said, "we can't——"

"Not now," he said, but some day——"

"Perhaps," I told him, as we followed Winnerly and old Tom Foran down the street. Beneath the rays of light from the windows of the Benedict plant the old man strode on, not fearfully, as if he were going to trial, but trustfully, as if he knew the end of the road were setting forth upon his right of way.

The Marriage That Was Arranged

By BERTA RUCK

[Continued from preceding page.]

seen any one so completely panic stricken. "My dearest child, you went?"

"Yes, and not much satisfaction did we get out of the fellow, though I think we put the wind up him rather," young Wye tried to carry it off with a laugh. "When I told him that I intended to bring an action for libel——"

This word broke off on a staccato note. A surprising change had come into the meek face under the gray hair net and the elder Miss Ashton gasped again.

"Libel? O, no, you can't do that. You mustn't do anything of the kind. You can't—can't bring any action!"

"But, auntie, certainly. Why not?"

Auntie, breathless and crimson; auntie, clutching at the silver chain for her eyeglasses; auntie, of all people, brought out this paralyzing announcement.

"B-b-because, you see, I sent that announcement to the paper myself!"

A second's indescribable pause.

Blank anguish on the face of the girl.

In the eyes of the young man, a dawning and dismayed sympathy.

Poor lady! He saw it all. Of course! This, the only relative apparently, belonging to this particularly attractive girl, Miss Sybil Ashton—this aunt—why, she ought to be in some home!

But she had still enough wits about her to guess his thought.

"I'm not mad," she announced, with a queer tremulous dignity holding her own. "It sounds mad. But I'll explain. Do sit down, Mr. Wye. I shall have to tell you all about it now. Of course, it all began with that—that——" she cleared her throat, "that young man on the fruit farm——"

Sybil Ashton demanded blankly, "What fruit farm?"

"In some place where there were no nice girls for the young men to get to know, you know," the spinster went on tremulously. "So one day when he was packing up apples from a cargo to England he scratched his name and address with a needle on the rosy peel of the apple and put underneath, 'Please write!'"

"But, auntie——"

"The rosy cheeked English girl who unpacked that apple began a correspondence, Sybil. And—and it ended in her going right out to California or wherever it was and getting married and living happ——"

"Auntie," coldly. "I fail to see what that has got to do with this; a story you read in a book?"

"It was so pretty and pathetic," from the incorrigibly romantic spinster, turning to the bewildered guest, "and so like Sybil——"

"Like me?" her niece protested in a small scream.

"Dearest, I couldn't help being reminded of you. Not the Californian part. But, really, some nice girls at home here do seem to see no more young men than if they were buried alive in apples on fruit farms somewhere. No, do let me finish, dear! There are girls who have no brothers and no sort of beginning to get men to come to the house! Pretty girls, too! I was one myself . . . such pretty browny-gold hair . . . all gray now . . . and no romance at all, except out of . . . of library catalogues . . . I think it's horrible . . . but O Sybil, *it does run in families!*"

"Auntie——"

"Just let me finish," hurried on the mischief maker, tremulously. "I thought if I could only . . . only stop that in time! . . . If I could turn it, somehow. . . . Even if it were all contradicted tomorrow the idea would have been brought into this house!"

She turned from the girl—a monument of embarrassment now—to the young man with unreadable emotion behind his honest eyes.

She fluttered on. "It—it looked so dreadful in print, though. This morning. . . . It was all different. I didn't dare explain to Sybil when she looked so furious——"

The gentle fraud turned again—to a Sybil looking more furious still.

At the sight of it that tremulous flow of excuse died away. The Victorian aunt faltered . . . she took refuge in the weapon of her times—a weapon even now not without efficacy.

Tears!

With a choking little apology, and fumbling in the breast of that gra silk shirt for a handkerchief, she sidled out of the drawing room.

"I say——" exclaimed young Wye, panic stricken at this sight of an unfamiliar arm. "I say, I'm so mad sorry, I——"

"It's you I'm sorry for," retorted the flushed and distracted Sybil. "Auntie is a—a disgrace!"

"But, good Lord, she was crying!" urged the warrior, gazing miserably at the door of exit. "I say, Miss Ashton! Go to her, won't you? Explain to her that as far's I'm concerned. . . . Heavens above! It's only you ladies I was worrying about! As for the darned old action—libel, indeed! I was pulling that manager's leg the whole time. There won't be another word said, of course!"

His eyes met the girl's eyes, met, lingered. . . . An odd thing happened; an abrupt and unexpected and unexplained thing; out of his eyes there glanced for a second the deep down subconscious personality of the young man, seeing ahead. . . .

It was the essential Arthur signaling to the sweetheart of his sudden choice. "Don't you know me? This is to be our last meeting, is it? . . . After I've seen you? I'll never leave you now! . . ."

It was the essential Sybil that signaled back in a look, "Why should I let you go?"

Then every day took command of them again and it was as if that instinctive flash had never been. The conventional Mr. Wye explained, "If we let this go on for, say a fortnight, Miss Ashton . . . d'you think you could stand it? Officially, of course; then, when you—er—jilt me, it won't be such a shock or seem as if one of us had treated the other badly. . . . A girl could quite decently change her mind in that time, couldn't she?"

"Quite," said the conventional Miss Ashton.

"Then that's understood. But I—I really can't go until that's explained to your aunt. If you don't mind——?"

Miss Ashton the younger found Miss Ashton the elder sobbing her heart out into her eiderdown.

"Auntie, don't! It's quite all right. Don't, don't! Here, take this nice clean handkerchief of mine. He—Mr. Wye—is being most awfully kind about all this . . . that's better . . . but O auntie! I do wish you'd tell me one thing——"

"Wuh—what, dearest——?"

"Why, why did you fix upon him"—she found herself blushing for no reason—"of all people, as the subject of this—this appalling experiment?"

"Because," sighed the spinster aunt on the backtow of a sob, "because I knew his uncle. . . . I mean I danced with him once. He wuh—was as good looking as this one. Perhaps all Arthurs are. rather. . . . And somehow, Sybil, when you just mentioned, casually, this one's name after you'd been to that house, it bub-brought it all back. A silly old woman's dream, dearest. I—I—I thought I'd like to see what those two names looked like in print . . . together. Don't scold me, Sybil."

The girl of a sturdier type was melted now. "You absurd old darling—I'm not going to scold——"

"Then," took up, diffidently, the woman of a generation that did sometimes gain its ends, against odds, "then will you, dearest, please ask this Mr. Wye to stay to lunch?"

After all, you see, the marriage was arranged! . . .

The Endurance of Jokes; Only Two in the World—*By George A. Birmingham*

SOME ONE—I think he was a professor of English literature — once said that there are only two jokes in the world—the drunken man joke and the mother-in-law joke. There are, so he admitted, many variations of the two themes, many ways of presenting the two supremely comic figures; but when we want to make each other laugh we always go back either to the drunken man or to the mother-in-law.

The statement is an exaggeration. There are other jokes. The curate's egg joke, for instance, which has nothing to do either with drunkards or mothers-in-law, and the more recent "Better 'Ole" joke. But it remains to be seen whether either of these jokes will survive, will amuse generation after generation as the two great jokes do. For the drunken man and the mother-in-law are very old jokes. They have proved their worth by provoking laughter for thousands of years, and they are still the most popular jokes there are. A comedian impersonating a drunkard is sure of his laugh, and a public speaker, finding his audience is getting bored, has only to say the words "mother-in-law" to provoke full-throated merriment.

Of the two the drunken man joke seems to be the older. The Spartans knew it, and used to make slaves drunk so that their sons, laughing heartily, might avoid the vice through fear of ridicule. The Jews knew it. Their ancient literature is singularly poor in comedy. There are not a half dozen jokes in the whole Old Testament, but the drunken man joke is there. Isaiah, a grim old puritan of a statesman, made it, and made it in an excellent form. The mother-in-law joke is not so old, but it goes back to classical times. We find it in Plutarch. "A man once threw a stone at a dog and hit his mother-in-law. 'Not such a bad shot, after all,' he said." That is Plutarch's version of the joke. It is so neat and epigrammatic that I think the joke itself must been old in his time. He could scarcely have achieved such perfect form unless he had been working on a long-familiar idea. But ancient as these jokes are, they have lost none of their freshness for us. Time, it appears, cannot stale their infinite variety. We may fairly suppose that they will last as long as our race does. America may go dry, but the great comic tradition of the drunken man will survive even in Texas. The Bolshevists may abolish marriage, but men will always remember what marriage was because they will always laugh when any one says "mother-in-law." We may picture to ourselves the last survivors of our race shivering in icy caves while the sun smolders to extinction. They will no doubt cheer the desperate hardship of their winter by inventing fresh quips about drunken men and mothers-in-law.

No other joke seems to possess this quality of endurance. Indeed the path of man's progress through the ages is strewn with the corpses of dead jokes which once were vital enough, but somehow missed immortality. There is the "doctor" joke, for instance. The ancients knew it. "Physician, heal thyself," is a proverbial form of it. The story of the medical man who went out hunting is another version of it. "Today at least," said a friend who met him, "you will kill nothing." It survived down to the middle of the last century, and even in our own time G. B. Shaw has attempted to galvanize it into fresh life. But the joke is really dead.

The lawyer joke, also a good one in its day, is not, I think, so old; but our grandfathers were very fond of it. A gentleman invited to attend the funeral of a solicitor, expressed his surprise that solicitors had funerals. "I always thought," he said, "that when a solicitor died his body was shut up in a room for the night and was found next morning to have disappeared, leaving a smell of sulphur and brimstone in the house." "The devil has him now to a certainty," said another gentleman on hearing of the death of his family solicitor. When some one remonstrated with him for his want of charity, he replied, "Well, if the devil hasn't got him I don't see the use of keeping a devil at all." For us the lawyer joke is dead. There is, of course, always something comic in the idea of the devil getting any one, though it is hard to say why, for the thing is serious enough. But we no longer burst into merriment at the thought of a lawyer as the victim.

In the Middle Ages the priest or monk joke was very popular and survived until quite recent times in an attenuated form, with a curate as the central figure. But the curate joke is moribund, in spite of the egg which is good in parts. No one can be quite sure now of getting a laugh by mentioning a curate, though the tradition that ladies make slippers for curates still survives in suburban circles. It must be more than half a century since any lady made a slipper for a curate, so perhaps it is no wonder that the joke is wearing thin. To survive, a joke must have some point of contact with actual experience, as the mother-in-law has, and the drunken man.

But if we have lost many old jokes of sterling quality we have created a few new ones which our ancestors knew nothing about. There is, for instance, the "politician" joke, which is rapidly becoming popular. Politicians have long struck me as funny, and for years I have felt inclined to laugh when I heard of one. I did not know that they affected other people in the same way until one evening when I was addressing an audience of soldiers in France. In the course of my speech I used the word "politician," without the slightest intention of making a joke, just as I might have used the word "librarian" or "electrician." But the moment I said "politician" the audience began to laugh and I grasped the fact that I had—not made but uttered a joke. I tried the experiment several times afterward and the result was most satisfactory. There was always laughter. The same thing holds good at home among civilians. A speaker who wishes to cheer up his audience is as safe with "politician" as he is with "mother-in-law." Let any orator try the experiment. "Now, if I were a politician, I should say —" or "I'm not a politician, but if I were —." In each case a faithful reporter will insert the words "loud laughter" at the point indicated by dashes.

The fact is that there is something irresistibly comic about any class or set of men who take themselves very seriously and pretend to be superior to the rest of us. We laughed at doctors when they walked about with gold-headed canes, talked bastard Latin and tried to persuade us that there was something occult about castor oil. We liked the lawyer joke so long as lawyers pretended that there was a mystical virtue in the jargon of their professional documents, and tried to frighten us with their absurd ritual of wigs and robes. We still laugh at the mother-in-law because, having managed a house of her own and reared at least one baby, she tries to come the wise woman over the next generation, which in its turn has taken up the job of running houses and rearing babies. We laugh at a drunken man because he is a perfect figure of portentous solemnity with utter imbecility behind it. Mothers-in-law and drunken men always seem to have behaved in this way, so the jokes associated with them are immortal.

The doctors, priests and lawyers have more or less got over their bad habits, have occasionally laughed at themselves, and so the world has stopped laughing at them. Perhaps some day our politicians will give up pretending that they regulate human affairs, will admit candidly that nothing they say or do makes the slightest difference to our lives and that they are just men earning their bread and butter like the rest of us. Then we shall stop laughing at them, and the politician joke, like the doctor joke and many others, will quietly die.

In a Class by Himself

AN IRISH drill sergeant was instructing some recruits in the mysteries of marching movements, and found great difficulty in getting a countryman of his to halt when the command was given.

After explaining and illustrating several times, he approached the recruit, sized him up silently for a couple of minutes and then demanded his name.

"Casey, sir," was the reply.

"Well, Casey, did ye iver drive a mule?"

"Yis, sor."

"What did ye say when you wanted him to stop?"

"Whoa."

The sergeant turned away and immediately put his squad in motion. After they had advanced a dozen yards or so he bawled out at the top of his lungs: "Squad, halt! Whoa, Casey!"

The Ruling Habit

IN BOSTON they tell this story of a certain absent-minded professor:

One evening he appeared in the drawing room ready to escort his wife to the theatre.

"Dearie," said she, "I am not at all pleased with that tie you are wearing. Please go upstairs and change to a black one."

Very obediently the professor went up to do as directed. After many minutes of impatient waiting the wife followed. His tie removed, the professor had absent-mindedly continued th undressing process, and as his spouse entered he climbed placidly into bed.